

The Pocahontas Times.

If thou wouldest read a lesson that will keep thy heart from fainting and thy soul from sleep, Go to the woods and hills.—Longfellow.

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T. S. MCNEEL

THE HELGRAMMITE.

AN INTERESTING LITTLE ISHMAELITE.

His Hard Lot In Life Makes
Him Pessimistic.

The unobtrusive helgrammite is chosen for the text of this week's chapter on natural history subjects. It cannot be said that this interesting little creature is a general favorite with the males of any manner of meats, although with the good sense which has ever characterized the sex, there are members who will take the helgrammite by the back of the neck and impale him on a hook as a lure for the wary bass. But it is done with no air of gusto for these tender hearts, they seem to involuntary realize that in some inexplicable manner the little Ishmaelite has feelings like folks in some small degree at least.

The Standard Dictionary lists the helgrammite as the large aquatic larva of a silial insect (having elongated chest and large wings—beetle like) much used for bait for black bass and other fish. About our streams are found two kinds, exactly alike and apparently the same, but generally named in two classes, those found in the water at all seasons and those to be unearthed by turning up stones in the spring and early summer months. When the helgrammite is first found under the stones in the spring he has burrowed himself a bed, and is a very active householder ready to lay about him with will and bite anything within reaching distance. He is black and tough and has the temper of a pirate. With warning of the weather incubation as it were sets in and he gradually emerges from his greaser like skin, after which he is soft and effeminate in comparison to his former self, but he will still exhibit a helpless fury when disturbed. The transfiguration of the helgrammite is more gradual than his cousin the caterpillar, which, when it has cast aside its outer covering, is a full fledged butterfly. The helgrammite takes his course from an egg deposited in some stagnant pool to the fly which lays the eggs by stages, and the business like, uncertain tempered insect, that flies by night and looks as though he might sting, suggests not the pampered cocoon-sheltered early existence of the thoughtless favored child of nature, the butterfly. Undoubtedly the helgrammite's early experience and training has a lot to do with his pessimistic way of looking at life.

No sooner does he open his eyes than he has to assert his individuality or become more of a nonentity than he was while yet an unbroken egg. Nature is kind to him inasmuch as she provides a sufficient store of nourishment to tide him over the scarce season while he is getting accustomed to his surroundings by allowing him to grow over the parent egg and not encasing him inside it. Fishes both small and great, lie in wait to make a meal of him during his existence under water and aquatic birds are ever nosing around in the mud where he has sought refuge from the fish.

When that inexplicable something, which is met betwixt something doing in the matrimonial line, seizes the helgrammite he betakes himself to the land and domiciles under a stone, care must be taken lest he go to a too dry a location, one likely to be inhabitated or invaded by ants. If this precaution is not taken the helgrammite will find himself in the same situation as did Gulliver when he awoke from his sleep in the land of the Lilliputians, only the helgrammite will have the painful experience of being carried away and salted down piece meal.

We used to hear a fairy tale about the poison of the helgrammite being as virulent as that of the rattlesnake or copperhead, that they were close allied to the scorpion and centipede families and to be bitten by one meant death in a horrible manner. Of course, nobody really believed it, but in handling them we are careful not to get in the way of the pinchers, not that we are afraid or anything but we have a constitutional aversion to being bitten.

In former years when the catching of a bass as she watched her nest only involved a question of ethics and there was no law to be violated, helgrammites were used for bass bait and brought good returns. Now by the middle of June the helgrammite has usually taken to himself wings and flown, but if the season be late, as is the

case this year, and helgrammites can be obtained they do not prove as acceptable as earlier in the season when the bass are so taken up with love making, fighting and housekeeping preparations that they have little time to stir around for something to eat and readily gulp down most anything that comes handy often sinking to the level of the plebian grub or sucker and eating fish worm, when they think no other bass is looking.

Just here some remarks that the queenly trout is equally as fond of the lordly bass and the same worms with avidity. This can only be explained by the fact that what hurts a man standing in one community will be the means of his election elsewhere. So after the scarce season has passed the trials of love making and the responsibilities of nest keeping over, a bass loses cast when he eats a fish worm or helgrammite.

Theodore Roosevelt.
By Harry Graham.
In Metropolitan Magazine.

Alert as bird or early worm,
Yet gifted with those courtly
ways.

Which connoisseurs correctly term
"The tout-à-part d'y-a de Louis
Seize".

He reigns, by popular assent,
The People's peerless President!

Behold him! Squarely built and
small,

With hands that would resem-
ble Lizt's,

Did they not forcibly recall
The contours of Fitzsimmon's
fists;

Beneath whose velvet gloves you
feel

The politician's grip of steel.

Accomplished as a King should be,
And autocratic as a Czar,

To him all classes bow'd the knee,

In spotless Washington afar;

And while his jealous rivals scoff,
He wears the smile that won't

come off.

In him combined we critics find
The diplomatic skill of Choate,

Elijah Dowie's breadth of mind

And Chauncey's fund of anecdote;

He joins the morals of Susannah

To Dr. Munyon's bedside manner.

The rugged virtues of his race

He softens with a Dewey's tact;

Combining Shaffer's easy grace

With all Bourke Cochran's love
of fact;

To Dooley's pow'r of observation

He adds the charms of Carri-
Nation.

And since his sole delight and
pride

Are exercise and open air,

His spirit chafes at being tied

All day to an official chair;

The bell-boys in the room be-
neath)

Can hear him gnash his sterried
teeth.

In summer-time he can't resist

A country gallop on his cob,

So, like a thorough altruist,

He lets another do his job;

In winter he will work all day,

But when the sun shines he makes
Hay.

And thus, in spite of office ties

He manages to take a lot

Of healthy outdoor exercise,

Where other Presidents have
not;

As I can prove by drawing your
Attention to his "carte de jour."

At 6 a. m. he shoots a bear,

At 8 he schools a restive horse,

From 10 to 4 he takes the air—

(He doesn't take it all, of course)

And then at 5 o'clock, maybe,

Some colored man drops in to tea.

At intervals throughout the day

He spins around the house,

Or if

His residence is Oyster Bay,

He races up and down the cliff;

While seagulls scream about his
legs,

Or hasten home to hide their
eggs.

In martial exploits he delights,

And has no fear of War's
alarms;

The hero of a hundred fights,

Since first he was a child (in
arms):

Like battle-horse, when bugles
bray,

He champ his bit and tries to
neigh.

And spite of jeers that foes have
hurled,

No problems can his soul per-
plex;

He lectures women of the world

Upon the duties of their sex,

And with unfailing courage thrusts

His spoke within the wheels of

Trusts.

A lion is his crest, you know,

Columbia stooping to caress it,

With *vit et armis* writ below,

Nemo impune lacessit;

His motto, as you've read already,

Semper paratus—always Teddy.

Modern Short Stories.

By Tom Mason.
In Collins Weekly.

Caleb, who had been away on a long photographic tour, his Nature books having brought him a million and a half, in three months, suddenly met his best friend coming out of the house, accompanied by his wife.

"As I suspected," said Caleb, who, though outwardly calm, felt within him a perfect hell of jealousy.

"Whither away?" he asked lightly.

Caleb's friend did not deign to answer, but got into his automobile and sped away. Caleb's wife did not permit herself to be disturbed.

"Just in time, dear," he said. "Have you had luncheon?"

"No," said Caleb. "Keep it for me. I will be back at four. Meet me in my dark room at that hour."

A sudden thought struck him. He would have his revenge. In the distance he could hear his bright little four-year-old boy playing on the hand-organ Caleb had given him for Christmas to keep him quiet. But already his mind was made up.

He hastened madly to a clump of woods on the outskirts of the town. He called the old familiar call, and in a few moments he was surrounded by his small company of trained rattlesnakes.

"Ah, Fanger," he said to the largest one. "Once I did you a service. Now you must do me one. At four o'clock this afternoon I will take you to my dark room. You must bite my faithful wife, Fanger. Then I shall sit and taunt her while she slowly dies."

He put the snake in his tail pocket and hurried homeward.

She was waiting for him as he entered the dark room.

"Here, dear," she said, "is a luncheon. I cooked it myself."

Caleb locked the door.

"Woman," he said, "my calmness has been a mask. You were about to elope with my best friend. Now is the hour when my revenge is complete. Here, Fanger strike while the lunch is hot."

The snake prepared to obey, while the terrified woman sank on her knees and pleaded for her life. At this moment, however, the strains of a hand organ were heard outside. Willie had come to serenade them.

The snake hesitated. He was charmed. It was a moment of intense dramatic interest.

"Play, Willie," said Caleb's wife.

"Up, Willie, said Caleb.

Would the boy stop? In after years, could he look back with a fond smile to think he had once saved his mother's life?